

HARMONY FIRE DISTRICT

P.O. Box 360 – 194 Putnam Pike
Harmony, R.I. 02829

The regularly scheduled monthly meeting of the Harmony Fire District Executive Board was held at the Harmony Fire Station on **Thursday, April 18, 2013.**

Present: Moderator – Raymond Fogarty, Jr.;
Treasurer – Sandra Owens; Tax Collector/Clerk – Kimberly Barber;
Board Members – Louise Michaels, Milton Huston,
George Kain & James Richards
Association Representative – Linda Ferragamo, President;
Attorney – Fred Mason, Jr.

Absent: Chief Stuart Pearson – excused

I. – Meeting Called to Order: 7:09 pm by Moderator Fogarty.

II. - Approval of the minutes from the March 21st meeting.

Moderator Fogarty asked the board if there were any discrepancies to note on the minutes from the March 21st meeting. If there are no corrections, he would like to call for a motion to accept them.

Milton made a motion to accept the minutes. Jim seconded the motion.
The motion carried unanimously.

III. – Approval of Bills:

A check register of bills to be paid was provided to all board members in their folder. Moderator Fogarty asked if there were any comments or questions on these expenses. If not, he would like to call for a motion to accept them as presented.

Jim made a motion to approve the bills. Louise seconded the motion.
The motion carried unanimously.

IV. - Treasurer's Report:

Beginning balance February 1st \$510,358.14 and ending balance February 28th \$482,231.81.
There were routine bills this month.

Beginning balance March 1st \$482,231.81 and ending balance March 31st \$474,892.23.
Again, there were fairly routine bills this month.

As voted on a 50,000 CD has been created from the general fund, for the truck fund. This brings the total truck funds to \$141,385.65 as of March 31st.

Ray stated that next month there would be a Budget Workshop in preparation for our Annual Meeting. The board agreed to meet at 6:30 pm, prior to the regular meeting.

Louise made a motion to accept the February and March Treasurer's reports as presented. Milton seconded it. The motion carried unanimously.

V. - Tax Collector's Report:

The taxes receivable balance as of today's date is \$67,262.34. Sandy commented that this balance seems lower than in previous years, collections must be going very well, good job.

Taxes collected in the month of March totaled \$13,740.85.

Third party billing fees collected in the month of March were \$14,060.78.

As our By-Laws require, Kim received the official *Office Nomination Letter* from the Moderator for the upcoming election. All running for office will be incumbents with no opposition slated to date. The executive board member running for reelection this year will be Milton Huston.

At last month's meeting a letter had been received from a taxpayer inquiring about the taxing authority of the district, amongst other things. The board had provided Attorney Mason a copy and asked him to prepare a letter to reply to this individual. Kim asked Attorney Mason if she could have a copy for her records. He stated that he had computer issues and had not been able to complete it, but will get it done before next month's meeting.

The Chief had asked Kim to be sure to give an update on the status of our outstanding grants to the board while he was away.

- 1.) VFA – 50/50 Grant for Wildland Firefighting gear \$2,600.50
Update: reimbursement documentation submitted on 4/5/13.
- 2.) AFG – Training Material Grant \$43,049
submitted 7/3/12 with letters of support from Langevin & Whitehouse
Update: letters started going out the 2nd week of March to those applicants not receiving prescores high enough to qualify them to proceed to the peer review panel evaluation – we have not received any notification as of today.
- 3.) FEMA Innovation Challenge - \$31,500 Grant for Mobile Data Terminals with GIS
Submitted 10/22/12 – awardees were supposed to have been notified by 11/23/12 and funded in December. As we had informed you they were overwhelmed with over 2,200 applications and the review process was more lengthy than they had expected.
Update: no new information has been received since 1/19/13. Kim sent an e-mail inquiry today but has not received any response.

Jim made a motion to accept the Tax Collector's report. Louise seconded it. The motion carried unanimously.

VI. - Chief's Report:

No report available.

VII. – Harmony Fire Department & Improvement Association Report:

The Annual Banquet was this past Saturday night at Crystal Lake. It was very well attended and everyone had a great time. Linda said she has received much positive feedback about the event and everyone loved the food. She thanked the district board for the gifts, they were really nice.

Linda provided an expenditure report for the \$2,000 in funds appropriated January 17th by the district board for new gym equipment. They actually came in under budget. She also wanted to mention all of the hard work Private John Detri had put into the renovations. He did quite a lot of work and did a great job. The board asked her to relay their thanks to him for a job well done. Ray asked if the gym was complete now or if there was anything else needed. Linda said she believed it was complete.

Rowing Machine	\$849.00
Clock/Timer	299.00
Scale	53.16
Shipping	+ 54.76
Total Expended	\$1,255.92

Also Tuesday night Bob Pierce received the Fireman of the Year award from the Chepachet Grange. Attending in support of his achievement were Deputy Chief Segee, George Kain – District Board representative, Linda Ferragamo – HFD Association President and Private Andy Noonan with his wife Linda. Linda said Bob was very humble about the award, but he was truly deserving. It was a nice night.

Linda also mentioned that the Association was talking about having an Open House sometime in May. She said she was not on the committee and did not have any further details at this time.

The next event we have will be for Chief Goodnough, who as we all know is retiring. His department is planning a surprise party June 15th at the Village Haven, but we don't have any other information yet.

Louise made a motion to accept the Association's report. George seconded it. The motion carried unanimously.

VIII. - Committee Reports:

a. Policies & Procedures Manual – Milton, Chair

A draft of the handbook had been presented at last month's meeting. The board members are still reviewing it and also requested that it be posted on the district website in order to get feedback from the crew. Kim said that the IT guy, Chris Fusaro, would be in the office tomorrow, so she would ask him about it then.

A motion was made by Louise to post the draft Policies & Procedures Manual in pdf format on the Harmony Fire District website for crew review until our next meeting. George seconded it. The motion carried unanimously.

b. Broadband Work Team – Milton & Stephen Kut, Co-Chairs

Ray stated that he had not been able to schedule a meeting with Stuart Freiman of the RIEDC yet.

Milton suggested to the board that the broadband project take focus on mobile devices and applications. He will start to research this angle for the project. Some

discussion followed about the applications. Ray suggested that we hold a seminar on this topic open to the crew and public.

George asked about the GIS people that had made the presentation on our Smartboard. He thought they were supposed to come back with further information. Ray stated that once the potential funding fell through the project came to a standstill. Further discussion followed about the unfunded project.

- c. Property Review Work Team – George & Louise, Co-Chairs
The Work Team will get together again soon.

- d. Apparatus Review Work Team – Jim Richards, Chair
Work Team: Jim, George, Chief, Deputy Chief Segee, Lt. John Falco & Pvt. George Nichols

Jim stated that the Work Team would be ready with its recommendation for the Annual Meeting. George suggested that they prepare a slideshow on the Smartboard of the truck diagrams and pictures for the annual meeting. Louise agreed stating that they should be utilizing this equipment more. Kim said she had an idea to prepare a power point presentation to go along with the budget review at the annual meeting. The board agreed that would be a great idea.

IX. - Old Business:

- a. Update on RIDOT proposed Roadwork in Harmony
A copy was included in everyone's folder of the letter sent to the RIDOT and cc: to our elected officials.
Ray stated that it was 22 years ago that our stretch of Route 44 was last paved and something needs to be done. He said he would take it upon himself to contact our elected officials. He asked that Chief Pearson contact Robert Smith of the RIDOT.
- b. District/Town-wide Coverage
No new information.

X. - New Business:

Louise brought up the issues going on at the Central Coventry Fire District. She wanted to know if the district had insurance that would cover the board members personally if anything ever happened here. Ray stated that the district does have liability and gross negligence coverage for these types of issues.

Louise also asked about a forensic audit. Is this something that we need to do? Ray stated that we do have an audit done every year here, but a forensic audit is something different. Where our Audit takes sampling of invoices to check, say every 10, a forensic audit checks every single one. The other difference is cost. We budget \$2,750 annually for our audit now. The forensic audit would cost approximately \$20-25,000. He said in his opinion it isn't something we would need every year, but maybe at 7-10 year intervals in might not be a bad idea. He suggested that we get an impartial party to give us guidance in this area. The board agreed. Sandy stated that we have several differences from Coventry in the facts that we have no pension plan and we have no loans, except for the building loan. So to justify a \$25,000 expense for someone to come look through our folder of bills, she just can't see it.

Ray stated that the only real unfunded liability we do have is the Chief's severance that we are contractually bound to. Sandy said that we do have a separate account for this item. This is something that should be estimated by the Chief and verified by the Auditor. The account should be funded more accurately, even if it takes 3 years to get it funded to the right level.

Ray also said that we have had the same auditor for quite some years now and it may be time for a change. Ray explained that at Bryant it is common practice that they use the same auditor for only 7 years then change. The thought is that the companies become "familiar" and may miss something that someone from a fresh perspective will not. This is something we may also want to address in the near future. He also brought up the fact that our audit procedure takes so long each year. We should be able to close out our year end books much more quickly. Sandy thought that some of the issue might be because she had not got her reports to him quick enough. Kim suggested that perhaps there be verbiage be added to the auditor's contract for the upcoming year. It could state that we would submit our material to him by say September 1st and require a maximum 60 day turnaround with the completed audit report, with a penalty charge if late. Sandy agreed stating that it would motivate both sides to be quicker with the process. Further discussion followed regarding our audit procedure and about the issues Central Coventry Fire District is going through.

George asked if there had been any updates on the legislative issues we had discussed last month. He had spoken to the RIAFC lobbyist at an association meeting last week and he was given some bill numbers, but he has not had a chance to look into them. Kim stated that she and the Chief have been watching the legislation and all of the aforementioned items do not have any "legs". They have all been referred to committee for further review.

George also stated that he had looked into the item he had mentioned several months ago about portions of fines assessed to motor vehicles being paid to EMS. He did find the legislation, it is on the books, but there is nothing binding for payment. He brought a copy of it to the Chief and he has forwarded it to the RIAFC lobbyist to look into it.

Smithfield Fire Department had asked Ray if we could put together a brief analysis of the number of mutual aid calls we respond to there and the total revenue it has generated for us. They have been turned down in their request to add a third rescue and would like to present this information to show the revenue they are losing. George adamantly objected to their request. He stated he would not support this, it would be like giving revenue away from our district. Their issues are not ours. Ray asked if the information could be compiled, including the same information on mutual aid to Chepachet and brought to the board at our next meeting, for the board's review only.

XI. - Public Input: No audience.

XII. – Executive Session: None called

XIII. – Adjournment:

Louise made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Milton seconded it. The motion carried unanimously. The April meeting of the Harmony Fire District Executive Board was adjourned at **8:17 pm.**

The next meeting of the Harmony Fire District Executive Board
is scheduled for **Thursday, 7:00 pm, May 16, 2013** at the Harmony Fire Department.

Prior to the meeting a **Budget Workshop** will be held at **6:30 pm.**

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kimberly S. Barber".

Kimberly S. Barber
Tax Collector/Secretary